

# TO THE CITIZENS OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON



A month ago, you responded swiftly and with great success when we asked you to save electricity during a cold snap that threatened to cause power shortages. During one peak-use hour, you joined with other Northwest residents to save enough power to supply the entire Portland metropolitan area for that time or almost enough to supply Seattle.

Now, because many of the same problems that confronted us in December are still with us, we need you to extend that conservation effort to use power wisely. Energy conservation is always a good idea - but it is critical now as our states face a winter in which we have fragile electricity supplies.

Regional electricity experts say we have enough electricity to meet our day-to-day needs for now - but there isn't much extra to go around. We don't have a comfortable cushion of extra electricity available for cold weather, crippled power plants or other potential problems. Part of the shortage reflects a decade of economic growth in the Northwest. At the same time, the development of new resources to supply more electricity for new businesses, homes and residents has not kept pace. We're working on that.

Another reason our electricity supplies are tight is that our region relies heavily on hydropower for most of our electricity. While hydropower is a clean and renewable energy resource, its availability depends on adequate rain and snow. This fall has been dry, leaving reservoirs lower than normal.

Traditionally, we try to meet some of our winter power needs by buying electricity from California. This winter, however, we can't count on power sales from California to make up the difference because that state's own electricity system is near collapse.

A second power issue is price. Some utilities have been buying electricity at a cost that is more than 30 times what they paid last year. These high prices will translate to escalating power costs for all consumers, and they pose a threat to our economy. We have already seen a handful of businesses close their doors because they can't afford the price of power. And we know that many of you are already concerned about your increasing power bills. The more electricity we can save, the less it will cost each of us in the long run.

A third concern is making sure that our power problems don't place more pressure on the environment. We can generate more power than usual when we need it by pushing our dams to their limits. But every time we further draw down reservoirs to meet our power needs, we leave less water behind to keep fish healthy.

Reducing energy use will help keep our electricity system reliable while we work on the problems, save you money and protect our native fish. Saving energy could mean undertaking simple short-term actions such as:

- turning down your thermostat a degree or two for the winter
- turning off lights, computers and other office equipment when not in use
- running only full loads of laundry in the washer and dryer
- running only full loads in your dishwasher and air drying the dishes
- turning down the thermostat on your hot water tank

It could also mean investing in longer-term conservation measures such as weatherizing your home or buying an energy-efficient appliance - steps that can pay you back over time. Your utility can help you determine what is best for your home or business. Please don't wait to conserve electricity until a power emergency hits. Let's work together to help avoid one.

John Kitzhaber  
Governor of Oregon

Gary Locke  
Governor of Washington

Stephen J. Wright  
Acting Administrator,  
Bonneville Power Administration

